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# EDITORIAL

By Robert Cassidy, Editor-in-Chief

Attachment # 

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## What owners want from CMs

**T**he Construction Management Association of America recently presented the results of a survey of more than 120 public- and private-sector owners. The chief conclusion: In the typical construction project, the most improvement is needed at the pre-design stage and in commissioning.

The overwhelming majority (95%) of survey respondents came down hard on designers, agreeing with the statement, "Architects need to be held more responsible for completing a quality design that can be built without numerous change orders or RFIs."

Incomplete drawings and poor pre-planning were the primary cause of cost overruns on projects, the owners said. Respondents said they felt a "pressing need" to control the scope of their projects during the pre-design phase. At the same time, 26% of respondents acknowledged that they do not give most projects the time they deserve.

When it comes to design documents, three of five owner-respondents (63%) said that the quality of these documents had declined "to the point where subcontractors such as electrical and mechanical are actually completing the design through shop drawings."

Eighty percent of respondents said they use a CM to manage projects, but only 34% of those who use CMs did so at the pre-design stage. The biggest group (46%) waited for the design phase before hiring a CM.

Owners generally expressed dissatisfaction with the commissioning process. On a scale of 1 ("excellent") to 5 ("poor"), most (43%) gave the commissioning process a neutral 3, but 28% rated it a 4 or 5.

Other findings from the survey

(conducted with FMI Corporation):

- 78% stated that owners should drive the improvement of ethical practices in the industry, while a nearly equal percentage (73%) said they have a documented ethical conduct code.

- Only about one in three owners (35%) demand the use of project collaboration software on their jobs, even though four in five owners (80%) said they believe such software could reduce disputes (read: litigation).

- Less than half (43%) planned to require their contractors to be equipped with interchangeable or interoperable software in the future.

- A solid majority of owners (57%) expect their CMs to provide leadership in managing projects from beginning to end, including design, funding, scheduling, and construction, while another 32% said they expect their CMs to handle inspection and contract administration for the construction phase only.

- "Green building" was seen as somewhat or very important to 37% of respondents, with another 38% saying it was becoming "increasingly important" in their businesses.

And what did owners say were their chief responsibilities? "Make timely decisions" (67%), "communicate clear work scope" (35%), and "require good project definition" (33%).

Now there's a scorecard for your next job!